

2.1 Planning Process

The comprehensive planning process began in October 2005 with the selection of an advisory committee. The Comprehensive Plan Advisory Committee (CPAC) was composed of Bryan residents, representatives from the City Council and City boards and commissions, representatives from Brazos County, the city of College Station, the Brazos Valley Council of Governments, the Metropolitan Planning Organization and the Texas Department of Transportation. The CPAC served to guide the preparation of the plan and provide insights into key issues, challenges and opportunities that lie before the city.

The first step in any planning process is to gain a firm understanding of the existing conditions and issues that confront the community. This involved a review of past comprehensive, area, thoroughfare and utility plans and a number of meetings with staff from several key departments.

From the very beginning, public participation was deemed essential to the formulation of the plan. A detailed public involvement process was established to include a dedicated web site, radio and newspaper advertising and coverage, focus groups, neighborhood meetings and community forums.

The tag line from the new City logo, “The Good Life, Texas Style” was used to establish a dedicated web site for the Comprehensive Plan. Goodlifetexasstyle.com contained material explaining the nature of comprehensive plans, why they are necessary, how they are created and how they are implemented. The site posted announcements of upcoming meetings, all presentations made to the Advisory Committee and draft maps and chapters of the Plan. The public could comment on the process and content directly through the web site.

A series of Focus Group meetings was held to solicit input from a wide variety of interest groups. These meetings were held over a two day period in January 2006. Additional meetings were held to accommodate those groups that could not meet on the arranged dates. Meetings were held with representatives from the following areas or groups:

Downtown Residents and Businesses	Blinn College
Bryan Independent School District	St. Joseph Hospital
Hispanic Community Leaders	Brazos Transit
African American Community Leaders	Council of Governments
Texas Department of Transportation	Metropolitan Planning Organization
Non-Profit Organizations	Affordable Housing Interests
Neighborhood Associations	Bryan Business Council
Bryan Middle and High School Students	Building and Land Development Forum

These meetings were followed up in April with four neighborhood meetings held at Sam Rayburn and Jane Long middle schools and Bonham and Sul Ross elementary schools. The meetings were held over the course of three weeks. Every property owner in Bryan was invited to these meetings by direct mail with almost 16,000 invitations being mailed. All the meetings were advertised in local papers, including a local Spanish language paper. Radio announcements and interviews were also arranged to help publicize the meetings.

All input received throughout the process was documented in the form of a chart for the review of the advisory committee and the formulation of goals and objectives.

Draft portions of the Plan were released to the public for review and comment in August at two community forums held at the Brazos Center. These events were scheduled over the course of several hours on two days to allow people to visit and review the draft plan at their leisure. Comments received at these forums were reported to the Advisory Committee and served to further refine the Plan.

The draft Plan was presented to the Planning and Zoning Commission on November 16 and December 14, 2006. It was unanimously recommended for adoption at the second hearing. The City Council held hearings for the Plan on January 9 and 16, 2007. The Plan was unanimously adopted following the second hearing.

2.2 Goals Formulation Process

In the context of comprehensive plans, a Goal describes a widely held desire that the community seeks to achieve. Objectives are more specific interim steps on the route leading to the achievement of stated Goals.

An Action Statement sets out the specific task that will be undertaken to achieve the City's Goals and Objectives within the context and the time horizon of its comprehensive plan.

The formulation of Goals and Objectives is a critical process to understanding and identifying the perceived needs of the citizens. These, in turn, are the basis for establishing the criteria for evaluating proposed development strategies and policies. Since the Goals and Objectives represent the collective will of the residents, they also establish the logic and rationale by which development initiatives and ordinances can be designed and defended.

The goals and objectives identified represent the product of all of the input solicited from Bryan residents and the CPAC at all steps throughout the planning process described above.

2.3 History

In 1859 the City of Bryan was established on 640 acres in Brazos County with a grid pattern of North/South avenues aligned parallel to the railroad, with East/West cross streets. Now situated in the north central section of the city, the original town site is easily distinguished on a map by its contrasting north-south orientation.

The town's namesake is William Joel Bryan, who came to Texas in the early 1800s as a member of Stephen F. Austin's colony. In 1860 the Houston and Texas Central Railroad came to Bryan and rapid growth occurred as a result. Bryan incorporated in 1871 and in 1876 the Agricultural and Mechanical College of Texas was established, later to become Texas A&M University. Bryan continued to grow over the decades with an economy initially connected to farming and later to the oil and petrochemical industry. Throughout this entire time, enrollment at the College continued to increase as did associated growth in professional and service industries.

The City of Bryan grew in geographic area through annexation (Figure 2-1). Prior to 1940, the City's expansion was primarily southward along the railroad and Texas and College Avenues, which connected Bryan with the campus of Texas A&M. The most significant boundary expansions occurred during the 1950s, extending the city south to a contiguous boundary with College Station. In the 1960s, annexation occurred in areas adjacent to the original town-site. This expansion balanced out previous growth to the south. Since 1970, further annexations resulted in expansion in all directions, but especially east and west along Bryan's common boundary with College Station.

During the 1970's growth occurred in all directions. However, the majority of new development was toward the largest economic generator in the region, Texas A&M University. Most new residential and commercial development continued to occur in the southeast portion of Bryan along East 29th Street, Villa Maria Road and Briarcrest Drive. During this period, a good deal of medium and high-density residential housing was constructed in response to the growing enrollment at Texas A&M.

The construction of the Texas Highway 6 Bypass in the late sixties influenced the migration of many businesses on Texas and South College Avenues, namely large-scale retailers and car dealerships, from these central locations to the Bypass, a trend which continues today.

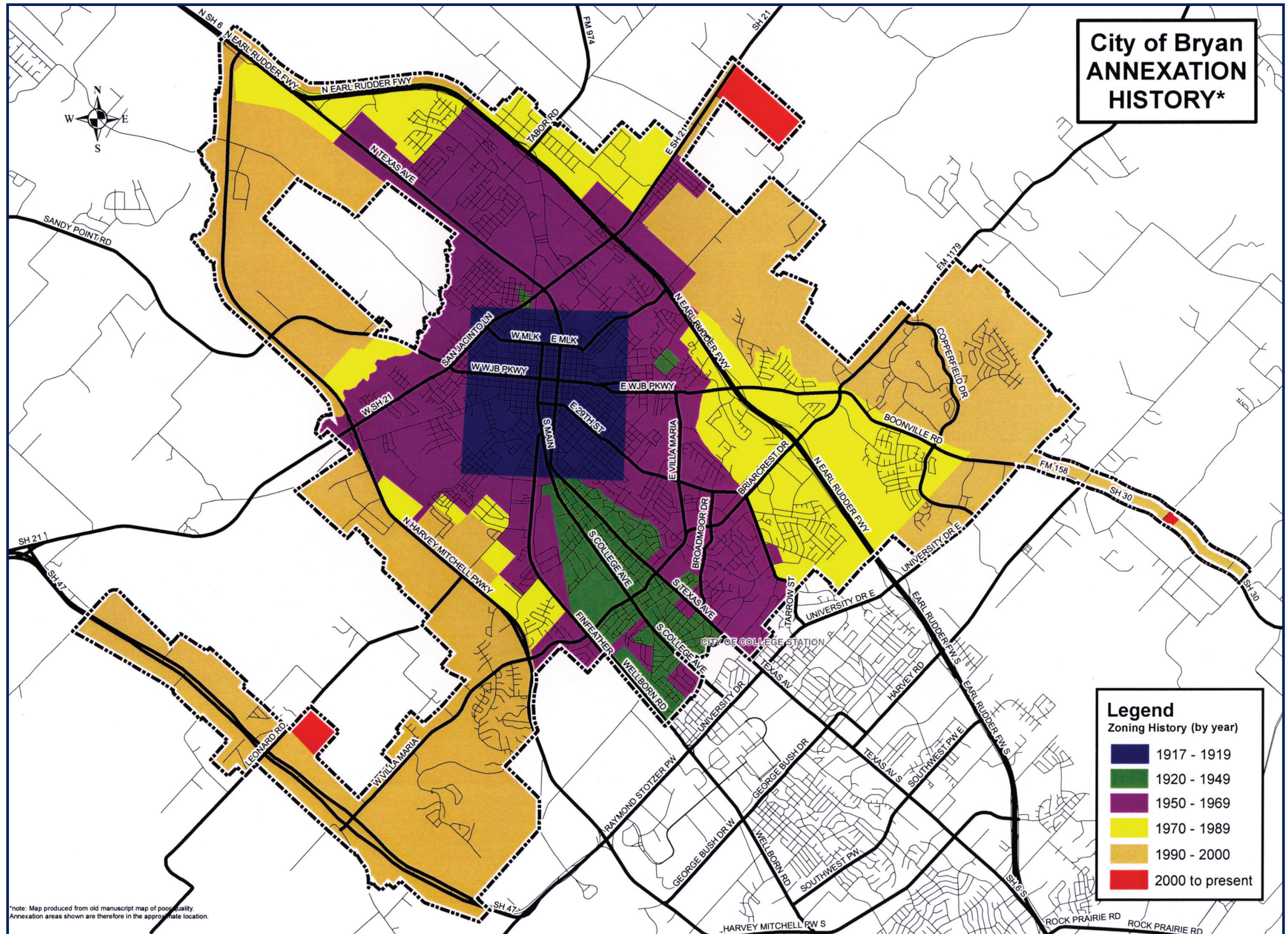
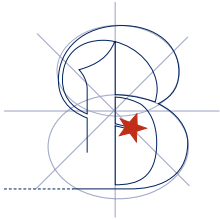


Figure 2-1 Annexation History



The consolidation of facilities on Blinn College's Bryan campus in 1997 sparked considerable growth and traffic as the campus grew to accommodate its present student population of over 10,000. In close proximity to Blinn College, St. Joseph Hospital, with its recent expansions, also drew traffic and peripheral development.

In the 1980s and 1990s, Bryan experienced significant growth in its commercial corridors, as well as infill and redevelopment opportunities in and around historic Downtown Bryan. The construction of a new major expressway corridor, State Highway 47, connecting State Highway 21 and Farm-to-Market Road 60, opened up thousands of acres for development and created a new gateway to Bryan's west side. Traditions, a planned residential development and the host of the Texas A&M University varsity golf teams, began construction on the west side. The George Bush Presidential Library and Museum at Texas A&M University increased tourism opportunities for the Brazos Valley area. Significant new planned residential development occurred on the east side of the city including Tiffany Park, Park Hudson and Miramont. The latter was developed in concert with the Miramont Country Club and golf course.

Presently Bryan encompasses an area of 43.8 square miles with an estimated 2005 population of 69,396¹.

2.4 Previous Plans

The 1952 Bryan Comprehensive Plan indicated a cluster development pattern concentrated around the original town site with most growth south along Texas Avenue and southeast of the Downtown area.

Bryan's second comprehensive plan was adopted in 1970. Because of the lack of zoning, this plan described prevailing land use as residential and commercial areas mixed at random and not consistent with a logical extension of the old town-site. "Strip commercial" development characterized commercial areas, resulting in increased traffic congestion. Industrial land uses created additional problems by encroaching on adjacent non-industrial land uses and hampering traffic flow. Additionally, the 1970 plan gave recognition to the City's well conceived park system and neighborhoods that were more representative of the City's future goals.

The adoption of zoning in 1990 and the 1993 Comprehensive Plan began the contemporary era of planning and development for Bryan. With the introduction of land use controls, this plan focused on the need to separate incompatible uses and address community appearance issues.

In 1998, the City Council initiated an update of the 1993 plan entitled 2000-2020 Bryan Comprehensive Plan. This plan addressed the need for comprehensive thoroughfare and utility plans along with a strong urban design component.

The update, adopted in August 1999, initiated a period of successful area studies. The Downtown Bryan Master Plan, adopted in 2001 called for the rehabilitation of the Main Street and Bryan Avenue corridors. The advocacy of the City Council, along with their approval of targeted rezonings, the involvement of a small but varied group of investors, and the City's capital improvement program, over years, culminated in the redevelopment of historic downtown Bryan and the adaptive rehabilitation of many downtown buildings.

In August 2001, the City completed the Central Business Corridor Standards. These standards focused on Villa Maria Road and Briarcrest Drive which connect Bryan's major growth areas on the east and west. The goal of this plan was the establishment of guidelines for development in this area to create a pedestrian-friendly, mixed-use development pattern.

The South College Avenue Corridor Redevelopment Plan was adopted in April 2002. The plan includes a mobility analysis, development design concepts, a corridor master plan and funding and implementation sections. The goals of this plan are the repair and partial redesign of the thoroughfare and the revitalization of the surrounding area. Though the construction outlined in this plan has yet to begin, recommended zoning and development regulations have been adopted.

² Texas State Data Center.

2.5 Regional Context

Bryan is located in the center of Brazos County and shares a corporate boundary on the south with the City of College Station. Brazos County is located in South Central Texas, between the Brazos and Navasota Rivers. Brazos County is bordered by Robertson, Madison, Grimes, Washington Burleson and Leon counties.

Several major metropolitan areas are easily accessible from the City of Bryan. Houston is located 95 miles southeast, Austin 104 miles west, San Antonio 166 miles southwest, and Dallas 180 miles north.

The area economy, once heavily dependent upon agriculture, has diversified greatly in the past twenty-five years. This diversification is due primarily to the expansion of the area's major employers; the Texas A&M University System and St Joseph Regional Health Center. Expansion of the local industrial base has also contributed to local employment and area population.

2.6 Physical Context

Bryan and Brazos County are endowed with many environmental resources—rivers, lakes, creeks, woodlands and wetlands. These significant natural features are both resources and constraints to development.

Climate

Bryan and Brazos County enjoy a warm temperate, humid continental climate. Temperatures range from an average daily minimum of 42 degrees Fahrenheit in January to an average daily maximum of 95 degrees Fahrenheit in July. Average rainfall is 39.2 inches per year. Summers are long, warm and dry, while winters are short and mild. The average frost-free season is 260 days in length.

Geology

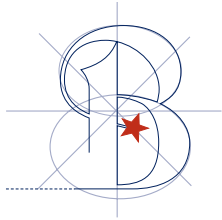
The geology of Brazos County consists primarily of unconsolidated sedimentary sands and clays, which are the parent material of most of the soils of the county. The major geologic formation underlying the county is the Yegua formation of the Eocene Claiborne group. Important mineral resources include lignite, sand and gravel, clay, natural gas and oil.

Soils

Soils in the Bryan area consist primarily of shallow claypan soils of the Lufkin-Tabor soil association. Soils typically have a 4 to 12 inch thick, grayish brown to pale brown fine sandy loam surface layer overlying dense, very slowly permeable claypan that restricts the utility of the soils. These soils form level to gently sloping uplands that are generally acidic with low productivity. Cultivated soils tend to be neutral to alkaline. The reddish, calcareous soils of the Brazos River floodplains are fertile, productive and rarely inundated, making them suitable for pasture and livestock farming. Dark soils of the prairie uplands are moderately fertile and suited for growing cotton, corn, sorghum and oats. Deep sands and shallow claypan soils of the post oak savannah have low natural fertility and are suited for pasture and woodlands. Low permeability and shrink-swell potential are limitations to development on clay and sandy-clay soils.

Topography

The major topographic land forms of Brazos County include level to gently rolling upland prairies and post oak savannahs, with average slopes of one to three percent. Bottomland areas include floodplains along the Brazos and Navasota Rivers and their tributary streams, creeks and eroded gullies. Surface elevations in the County rise from south to north and range from 109 to 308 feet above mean sea level. Bryan is on the topographic divide between the watersheds of the Brazos River to the west and the Navasota River to the east. Gullied washes and steeply sloping embankments are common along watercourses.



Water Resources

Surface water resources in Brazos County include the Brazos and Navasota Rivers and their tributaries. Major tributaries in the Bryan area include Thompson Creek, which drains to the Brazos River, and Carter Creek, which drains to the Navasota River. Lake Bryan, Country Club Lake and Finfeather Lake are also important water impoundments. Other surface water features include numerous small ponds and farm tanks.

Ground water resources include water bearing geologic formations found at several levels in the underground strata. Bryan has eight municipal water wells. These wells are approximately 3,000 feet deep and draw water from the Simsboro Sands of the Carrizo-Wilcox Aquifer.

Vegetation

Native plant communities include tall-grass prairie, post oak savannah and bottom land hardwoods. Grasses on the tall-grass prairie include bluestems, Indian grass, switchgrass, and gramas, along with winter wildrye and fescue grasses. The post oak savannah is characterized by open stands of post oak and blackjack oak trees in association with tall bunch grasses, which are the same as the prairie grasses with the addition of purpletop. Bottom land hardwood forests consist of oak, ash, elm, pecan, willow, and sycamore trees.

Endangered and Threatened Species

Brazos County is home to one endangered plant species, the Navasota Ladies'-Tresses and two endangered bird species, the Bald Eagle and the Whooping Crane. Presently there is no critical habitat proposed or designated for these endangered species. The City of Bryan should avoid development or other activity that has a detrimental impact on the habitat areas of threatened or endangered species.

Jurisdictional Wetlands

Wetlands in the Bryan area are found within riparian areas along Carter and Thompson Creeks and their tributaries; in riverine areas along the Brazos and Navasota Rivers; and other natural depressions and low-lying areas where runoff water ponds during wet seasons of the year. These low-lying ephemeral wetlands also include ponds and detention basins within developed areas that are used to maintain rainfall runoff at predevelopment levels. Coordination with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and U.S. Army Corps of Engineers is recommended during planning for future development to establish the identification of wetlands that may be impacted by the development. Planning for future development should include coordination with these agencies for evaluation of potential wetlands in specific project areas on a case by case basis.

